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LETTERS OF BENJAMIN WEST.

CONTRIBUTED BY THOMAS STEWARDSON.

DEAR JONATHAN

Our worthy Friend Tho^s Goodwin being just about to imbark on his returne to North America I could not lett so favourable an oppertunity Pass without returning you my thanks for your kind favour to me by Tho^s Carrington. By him I intended to have answered it but his leving this Place without giving me the least notice of his returne (which he reather promised me he would before his departure) has been the ocasion of this omission, which I hope my dear Friend will not think an neglect. As I can asssure him his letter gave me that pleasure which may be felt on the meeting of long absent Friends, for such was your letter to me. It revived fresh to my memory as tho I had been in the actual injoyment of the many Pleasing and happy hours I have spent with you in those Rural and inocent Juvenal amusements with which America alone abounds my Sighs are often intruding and vainely wishing again for those past pleasures which I have there so often axperiance in those Solitary retreats, or what they People of this side the water call the wilds of America and which is I think a true Image of the following celebrated lines—

“O Solitude; blest state of life below—
Friend to our thoughts and balm to all our woe
Where lust no object for his fires can gain
And Pride wants gazers, to admire her train
Where want no craveing feels no insults bear
Kind Lethe of our Passions and our cear
Far from the Burse, from Corts and levees far
The crouded Theatre and wrangling Bar
O! far from cities my abode remove
To realms of Innocence and Pace and love.”

My haveing had an oppertunity for the last ten years of my life from the vast Towre I have made in visiting the great

Capitals in Europe of forming and enlarging my knowledge of Both the world and man and thereby know that true value of America and the Boundless blessings which its inhabitation enjoy. For without this opportunity I might have remained in Ignorance of the real Blessings they Enjoy and the state of happiness that subsists between them. For it's by comparison we learn to know the true value of all things. And from thence arises its real worth and esteem.

As this is the part of the world my department in life has fixed me, I have endeavoured to accommodate and settle myself in a domestick life with my little Family which consists of my Dear Betsey her little Boy, a Servant or two—one house in the country four miles distance from Town where Betsey and her little Boy stays Eight months in the year and another in London where I carry on my Paintings. And by that I get exercise of coming into Town and going out to them every day. By which I secure my health in a good state, which otherways would be impossible by reason of my close application to studies.

My Father lives the chief of his time with his sister in Oxfordshire he is in extraordinary health for a man at his time in life, and has given over all intentions of ever returning to America.

I hope this will find your family and friends in health. I beg my kind love may be given to them all, and to all my relations and Friends, that you may meet with. And be assured Dear Jonathan I ever remain yours and their ever affectionate Friend

BENJ^N WEST

LONDON July 25th 1769.

LONDON NEWMAN STREET July 20th. 1798.

DEAR SIR

By the care of our friend W^m Savery, I had the satisfaction of receiving your letter; it was truly acceptable to me; for I know no higher gratification than that which arises from the intercourse with those, for which we have an esteem. And such was the receipt of your letter, as it

vivified in my recollection that delight which a retrospect of early life is sure to produce on the human mind, and it called into existence a friend, which the laps of eight and thirty years had as it were placed among the non existing. For that letter, and for the account it contained of my former friends, yourself and family, I return you my sincere thanks.

By the departure of W^m Savery for America, I embrace with pleasure the opportunity to give you this letter as a token, that the space of time above mentioned has not diminished that attachment I feel to early friendship; or that delight which you, in your letter revived in me, of the morning of my life, when innocently sporting on the Banks of those refreshing streems which lie in the shady Groves, that are in the nabourhood of Newtown. That period when viewed with my present situation, presents an extensive scale in human progress; and I beleve the single instance of one man participating in the amusements of the Wigwoms of American savages, and the refinements of the Royal Palaces of Europe. Early habits my friend make lasting impressions on our minds, and I am prosuaded were I to revisit those abodes, I should feel a greater joy then those felt by D^r Johnson (that great luminary in the lettered world) whom I heard say at his Club, when a friend asked the D^r then just returned from visiting the place of his Nativity after a space of 40 years absence, what gave him the greatest delight when there? Why Sir replied the D^r it was to jump over that Style when 70 years of age, which I had been accustom to jump over when I was a Boy going to the day school. From my feelings at the recollection of my juvinal footsteps, I am prosuaded the D^r spoke the dictates of his heart. So much for my feelings on this subject.

I must now my dear Sir before I close this letter, thank you for the knowledge of the Bearer. He is a man possessed of a benevolent mind towards his fellow men, and I beleve no country but Pennsylvania could have cultivated such a mind, for there the mind is free, and by that freedom

capable of receiving the dictates of reason without that bigotry and superstition which the artfull systemiseing policy of the old countries has clouded and bound the human mind by. The human mind is there bold in the investigation of first causes, and of things, by that capable of removing what is wrong, and receiving what is right, both in civil, and religious duties. Such a man is W^m Savery.

Whenever an opportunity presents itself to give me a few lines do not omit the conveyence; it will afford me great pleasure at all times to hear from you, and of my former acquaintance.

My two sons and their Mother are well, and I hope no change may have taken place in your family since you wrote me, that should occasion anxiety. My love to all, and be assured that I have a great satisfaction in declaring that I am

Dear sir, with friendship and regard

your much obliged

BENJ^N. WEST

D^R JONATHAN MORRIS